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perfect sanity, the judicial moderation with which every topic touching practical matters is treated. In this respect we have a continuance of the best traditions of English political economy, as seen in Smith, Mill, and Marshall. That intolerance of all irregularity which is characteristic of radicals and conservatives alike is noticeably absent. Thus, wage systems of every sort, time-wages, piece-wages, premium systems are each recognized as having a place in any normal order of things. Again, a summary of distribution which practically indorses the productivity theory is followed by a paragraph which opens with these words: "I need not impress upon you again that this beautiful theory of distribution is not literally true." So, while affirming that the subjective theory of trade cycles cannot be accepted, he after all says: "That commercial undulations must be ascribed, in part at least, to subjective causes there could be no reasonable doubt."

F. M. TAYLOR

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The Prevention of Destitution. By SIDNEY and BEATRICE WEBB.
London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911. 8vo, pp. vi+348.

This volume on the *Prevention of Destitution* covers ground familiar to those who have read the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (1909) and the propagandist books and pamphlets which have since been industriously circulated by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb through the medium of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution. This book is a new setting-forth of the policy of the Minority Report with arguments designed to meet various objections that have been raised by individuals and organizations that have opposed different parts of the minority plan. It is designed for the "ordinary reader," and technicalities, footnotes, or references have been relegated to appendices easily omitted. The writers in their preface especially commend to the reader their chapter on "Insurance," which was written while Mr. Lloyd George's bill was still pending. Now, however, the public is much more concerned as to the working of this new law than in the theoretical objections raised against it before its passage, and the insurance chapter is therefore less interesting today than other portions of the book.

From the first chapter on "Destitution as a Disease of Society" to the tenth and last chapter, that on the "Moral Factor," the book is brilliant and persuasive. The authors write with the weight of authority on nearly every phase of the social problem, and their indomitable

crusading zeal is so compelling that those already familiar with the principles advocated find a fresh and absorbing story in every chapter.

It is to be regretted that Mr. and Mrs. Webb constantly argue in behalf of the substitution of a policy of prevention for the "slovenly relief" of destitution as if the theory of prevention were entirely new and a monopoly of their own. The Majority Report sets forth the superiority of preventive over palliative measures just as clearly as does the Minority; and the Charity Organization Society has always stood for the prevention and cure of distress as opposed to its casual relief. It may be pointed out, too, that large public policies have been inaugurated for the prevention of sickness, the prevention of unemployment, the prevention of the propagation of the mentally unfit, and the prevention of child neglect in all its many hideous forms. Acknowledging that "all sides" are agreed on the theory of prevention and that disagreement comes only in working out practical details of method and technique, nevertheless this propagandist volume of the Webbs is not superfluous. To read it is to realize how slowly social reform moves, to grow impatient over the needless waste of human life and efficiency, to see the urgent need of aggressive measures. Face to face with the "morass" of destitution which is so vividly pictured, one is ready to embrace the gospel of a more persistent campaign of prevention than any that has yet been organized, and possibly even to accept the wholesale methods of salvation offered. It is brought vividly home, too, that modern destitution in our great cities is not only a physical state: "it means not merely a lack of food, clothing, and shelter, but also a condition of mental degradation—a sort of moral malaria which undermines the spiritual vitality of those subjected to its baneful influence."

Attention should be called to the chapter on voluntary agencies, which contains a most valuable discussion of the "characteristic qualities and defects of voluntary agencies, on the one hand, and public authorities on the other," in order to discover what their mutual relationship should be. On this point the following statement from Mr. and Mrs. Webb is of special interest and value:

In the domain of Social Pathology, we are, as yet, only groping in the dark, and experimenting. The opportunity and capacity for originating new developments in the treatment of individuals lie principally with the Voluntary Agency. The public authority is bound down by Statute and by authoritative Orders of the Central Executive Department, as well as limited by the disinclination of the local Ratepayers to expend money in unfamiliar ways. "We must not experiment with the Ratepayers' money" is perpetually an

effective plea. All sorts of prejudices and dislikes amongst the elected members of a committee or of a council have to be considered. In a Voluntary Agency, a person with new ideas, or a group of enthusiasts for new methods of treatment of particular cases, can put new devices to the test of experiment.

HULL HOUSE

EDITH ABBOTT

Unemployment: A Social Study. By B. SEEBOHM ROWNTREE and BRUNO LASKER. London: Macmillan, 1911. 8vo, pp. xvii+317. \$1.60 net.

Rowntree and Lasker's *Unemployment* must be assigned an important place among the numerous books recently published dealing with the problem of unemployment and of the unemployed. It presents the results of a detailed investigation of those without employment in the city of York, together with suggestions for remedying the evils which that investigation disclosed. Its value is enhanced by the fact that its scope and method of approach are different from those of any other book dealing with the subject and enable the reader to see the problem from a new angle and very concretely.

A census of working-class households made by the authors' enumerators revealed the fact that on June 7, 1910, there were 1,278 employable persons in York seeking work for wages but unable to find any suited to their capacities and under conditions which were reasonable, judged by local standards. This enumeration was followed by a careful study of those who were unemployed on the date indicated. Schedules designed to elicit full information as to industrial training, home life, amount and adequacy of family income, previous employment, age, character, etc., were used in this connection, and the data thus secured were checked by visits to school authorities and employers wherever possible.

According to the authors' tabulation, 129 of the 1,278 unemployed were youths under 19 years of age, 291 were men who had been in regular employment within two years, 441 were casual laborers (in other than the building trades), 173 belonged to the building trades, 105 were "workshy," while the remaining 139 were women and girls. A chapter is devoted to each of these groups. The data for each group are analyzed and methods of prevention, restoration, and care are suggested. As would be expected, the details indicate that a large percentage of the families were living under the poverty line and that there was great waste and deterioration of working power and much sacrifice of dependents. The appalling character of all this is made more vivid in chap. vii, which